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Bard

THE ORDER OF PATIENCE

Today's the one I waited for
to relent into telling
the whole history of touch

that every skin is different
one is Mörike and one is Proust
and one is waiting for you too

to bear your name
among the haptic wars
where I want you

and will no other take
or yield my soft because
or my hard yes

it has to be you
the skin says
will wait till leap year for that caress.

29 February 2004

CLOSENESS

Closer still

as close as tires press

some highway on the road to you

and let go so quick and evenly

a history of getting somewhere

with someone,

a sentence full of pronouns

mixed all together like

a power failure at a crowded dance.

29 February 2004

WOODPECKERS

Woodpeckers prowl the sky
why do they have to fly
to what they need

are we all tricksters who forgot the trick
comedians who left their gags behind?

is he hungry to touch her
because of her appetite for being touched?

Always blame the weather
because it's the only one there.

29 February 2004

IN HAPTIC SLEEP

a recollection woke
a poor little member
of a larger dream

a sidebar, an episode
left out of the printed version

that went like this:

*he saw her coming down the stars
like a woodcut in his uncle's book*

*from far away and all forget,
old Rosicrucian, the woman's seed—*

he had the wit to call out
and she the grace to answer him

their little dialogue
was printed at the bottom of the page
in old black letter

Lady, from which stars do you descend?
And she: From none. Alone I rise to you.

Then it was all telling again, and truth,
pine trees, garden anxieties,

weather, timetables, lost or stolen children,
night coming on and wine and forgetting.

Then it was far away and in his arms
and she was looking down

measuring her steps on muddy grass
and most things she thought have names

as wheels have spokes and felloes, hub and rim,
but not the things she stared at then

his mind tortured to guess not what she saw
but what she made of it, the wordless

subsoil of her conversation, the girl he never
got to touch but for whose sake he lived.

29 February 2004

REBIS

Rebis a body made twice
once for itself and once for me

as every desperate lover knows
a woman casts two shadows

one of them visible only to him.

29 February 2004

=====

You get home early when the plane dissolves
leaving its shadow on some cornfield west
and you are suddenly at your house again
opening the door and walking in and calling,
not sure if you're alive or dead but
then you're never sure, you take your pain
as a positive sign, an exhaustion,
but what do you know about the dead
and how they feel? Maybe they get tired too.

29 February 2004

=====

Cornfed light
of every day
a mother in the morning

masses and newspaper
the different taste
of freeday food

to remember
such things from life
and still be living

like a haiku
sailing down an artery
hinting good news.

29 February 2004

=====

sneezes . worries . wipes
his lips . what now
is he trying to evade

illness is refuge
he supposes . a hard cure
in a hard world

29 February 2004

=====

everything he eats or drinks
is poisonous

gift the Germans say
the given thing, the toxin
of reality

he wipes his nose
not for the first time
blows it

thinks about
Napoleon at Waterloo

the mind is weirder than the world
he thinks, and his eyes run

29 February 2004

=====

Yellow roses

after all

in blue glass

afterthought

29 February 2004

OLD FRIENDS

I pushed you out of my life
and almost out of yours

What can you feel but hatred
we both pretend will pass?

29 February 2004

=====

Suddenly words
are floating on the air

it is weird
seeing them so

something about gospels and Peter and denial
something about God about Galilee

and my eyes too
must be part of that story

I can remember
no part of my life before this night.

29 February 2004